

ULTIMATE

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24

HELLFIRE AND BRIMSTONE: PART 4 of 5



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Charles Xavier

Scott Summers

Jean Grey

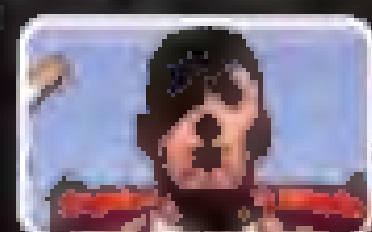
Ororo Munroe

Logan

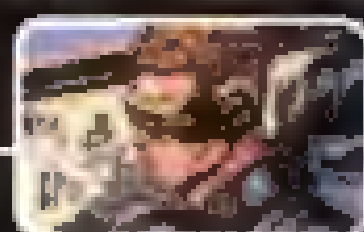
Kitty Pryde

Hank McCoy

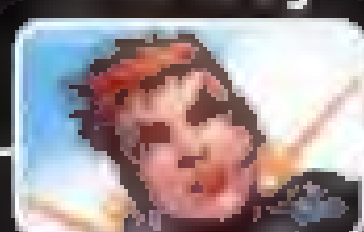
Peter Rasputin



Professor X



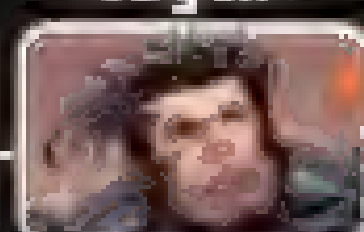
Cyclops



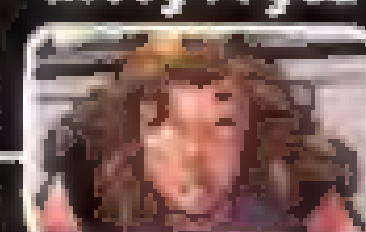
Marvel Girl



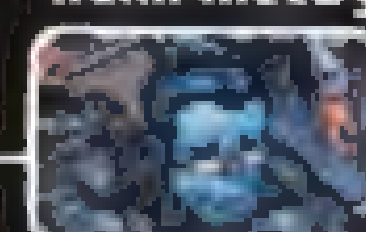
Storm



Wolverine



Kitty Pryde



Beast



Colossus

# HELLFIRE AND BRIMSTONE

## PART FOUR OF FIVE

### PREVIOUSLY IN ULTIMATE X-MEN:

Professor Charles Xavier brought them together to bridge the gap between man and mutant: Cyclops, Marvel Girl, Storm, Iceman, Beast, Colossus, Wolverine. They are The X-Men, soldiers for Xavier's dream of peaceful coexistence. This dream is now slowly being forged into reality.

A new Brotherhood of Mutants is on the loose. Led by Magneto's children, Quicksilver and Scarlet Witch, this new team now has a different agenda: steering clear of Magneto's violent ways and opting for disarming and paralyzing the world's military forces instead.

However, these new "peaceful" terrorist methods do not sit well with the new members The Brotherhood has recruited, members from a new subgroup of mutants called animal evolutionaries. When the mutant ape Prosimian discovers that Magneto is secretly alive and well, he decides to make it his personal mission to find the master of magnetism, remove his mental blocks, and return The Brotherhood to its former deadly ways. This plan involves duping the Beast into a meeting so they can ascertain Magneto's current whereabouts.

Former villains are not The X-Men's only worry though, as Xavier gears up for a legal battle with the parents of former X-Man Bobby Drake. As Iceman, Bobby was injured when the X-Men battled Xavier's son Proteus. Running on an anti-mutant campaign, Senator Turk has convinced Bobby's parents to sue The X-Men for a hundred million dollars.

Recently, a team of U.S. Special Forces Marines has gone missing while investigating Magneto's former base in the Savage Land, a vast land-mass in the Southern Hemisphere. The X-Men are asked to look into the matter and Professor Xavier sends Cyclops and Wolverine as they have both visited the Savage Land before. However, when they arrive in the dangerous wilds, they find that Kitty Pryde has disobeyed Xavier's direct orders and secretly stowed away on their plane!



Stan Lee presents:

# ULTIMATE X-MEN

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You ever get  
a look down here  
in the city's computer  
system when you were  
working for Magneto,  
Wolverine?

Oh, yeah. I'm  
such a *science  
nerd* I just couldn't  
*keep away* from  
Magneto's super  
computer.

*Gimme a break,*  
Cyclops. It's bad enough  
Charlie Xavier made me *go*  
on this stupid *male-bonding*  
exercise without having to  
put up with your boring  
conversation, *too*.







What's *next*?  
Happy memories of  
*waking up* every  
morning and the  
computer knowing  
how you liked your  
*eggs*?

Oh, for God's  
sake, *grow up*. If  
anybody's got a right  
to be holding a  
*grudge* here, it's  
*me*, mister.

How  
*come*? For  
stealing my  
girlfriend?



Jean *wasn't*  
your *girlfriend*,  
Wolverine. Besides, I  
really think it's up to  
*her* who she goes  
out with. Don't  
*you*?



Well, I really think you  
should *shut up* and concentrate  
on *the mission*, bub, 'coz we're  
getting closer and closer to  
those *missing soldiers* we're  
supposed to be tracking.

You  
picking  
up their  
*scent*?



No, I hear 'em  
singing *showtunes*,  
pencil-neck.

I swear to *God*, sometimes  
I wish *Kitty Pryde* was backing  
me up on this mission and *you*  
were the one playing *Snood*  
back on the X-Jet's  
computer.



## THE SAVAGE LAND:

Okay, I'm *sorry*, Professor. I *shouldn't* have stowed away in the jet, I *shouldn't* have come to The Savage Land, and I really, really, sincerely apologize for any *trouble* I've caused.

Is there anything *else* you want me to say?

## THE X-MANSION, UPSTATE NEW YORK:

No, Kitty. Absolutely *nothing* you can say will change the fact that I want your *bags packed* the minute you get back to the school. Do I make myself clear?

What? I *sneak off* on one, tiny mission and you're expelling me from The X-Men? That's *totally unfair*!

Cyclops joins *Magneto* and you welcome him back with *open arms*. Wolverine *kills*, like, a *million guys* and you hit him with a *written warning* or something.

How come I'm the one getting made an example of here?

Because your mother made it quite clear that she didn't want you taking part in any missions and you disobeyed her at the *first opportunity*, Kitty.

We're waiting to watch Bobby Drake's *formal declaration* against us on TV *right now*.

I don't want to be sitting here in *six months* time watching you and your mother make exactly the *same speech*.





Oh, come on, Professor. I'm hardly going to sue you.

Besides, a hundred million dollars isn't even lunch money to those super-rich Hellfire Club guys you said were funding this little enterprise.

Kitty? I'm losing your signal and my telepathy doesn't stretch to the Southern Hemisphere. Just tell me quickly-- do you want Peter to come down and pick you up or not?



Professor, I can turn *intangible* at the drop of a hat and I'm sitting on the roof of a billion dollar warplane. I hardly think I'm going to get mugged.



Teenagers!

How are you feeling today, Jean? Better?

Yeah. much better.



Last night I actually managed a full night's sleep without a single interruption.

No bad dreams, no hallucinations, no Egyptian Phoenix gods telling me they were coming here to eat the world...



I told you it would pass, Jean.

Your powers are just expanding as your body blossoms into adulthood. Almost exactly the same thing happened to me when I was your age, you know.







# TRIAL COURT, NEW YORK:



Testing, testing.  
One, two, three. Are  
we still getting feedback  
on the Senator's mike,  
Babs?

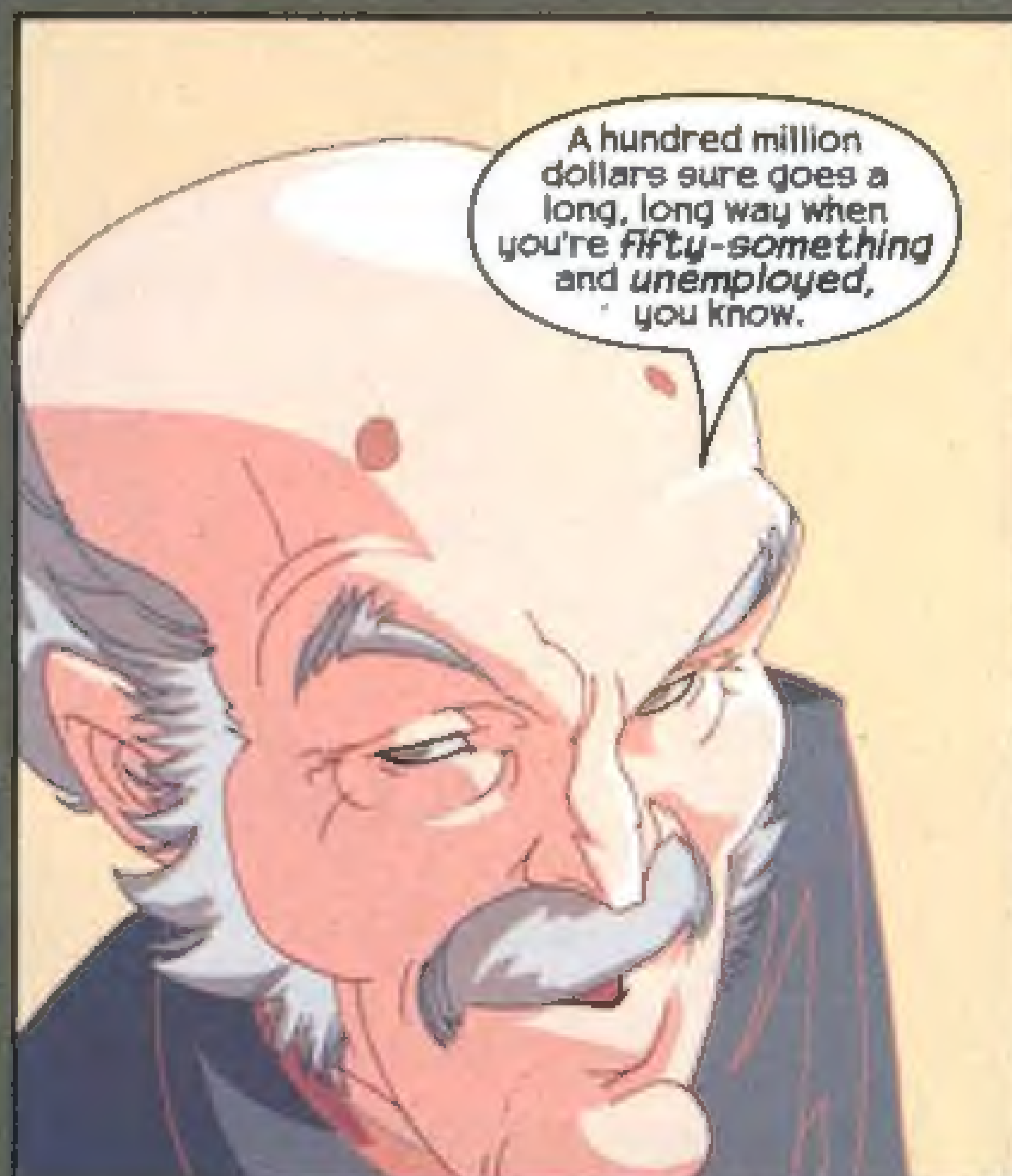
I sure wish you'd  
loosen up a little,  
Bobby. What you're  
gonna do here is very,  
very *brave*, my boy.  
I know your folks over  
there are *as proud*  
*as punch*.



Proud of  
what? *We knifing*  
*my friends?*

Xavier *ain't* your  
friend, Bobby. He's the  
most dangerous fella  
alive at the moment  
and he almost got  
you *killed*, son.

Besides, don't you  
think you kinda owe it  
to your old man to find  
*some* kinda financial  
compensation for the  
way *your* bad luck  
screwed up *their*  
*lives?*



A hundred million  
dollars sure goes a  
long, long way when  
you're *fifty-something*  
and *unemployed*,  
you know.



tell me  
about it,  
sir.



Ladies and gentlemen  
of the press, I'd like to  
take this opportunity to  
thank you all for coming  
here today.

As you know,  
I've taken a *special*  
interest in this lawsuit  
my young friend here is  
filing against *The X-Men*  
and we'd like to use this  
platform to confirm  
a few details.



As you can see, the  
*injuries* Bobby Drake  
sustained when he was  
a *member* of their  
mutant cult are quite  
comprehensive...

...but these are nothing  
compared to the  
*psychological* scars this  
fifteen year old boy has  
been left with after two  
school terms of *bullying*  
and *neglect*.



Bobby, perhaps you'd like to  
say a few words? Any chance you  
might enlighten us about what  
which *went on* behind the walls  
of this *secret school* they  
got *upstate*?



Uh, Bobby. If  
you'd like to read  
that *statement*  
you prepared,  
son...



Don't freeze  
up on me, boy. Not  
when we've got ten  
million impressionable  
viewers watching  
this at home...







Hey.

I got a *speech* here in front of me, just like Senator Turk has, but I'm not gonna *read* it 'coz, well, I didn't really *write* it and just about *none* of this stuff is true *anyway*.

What?



Sure, Professor Xavier sent us on *dangerous missions*, but it was only ever to help *ordinary people* like you.

Sure, some of us almost got killed a few times, but he's training us to be *super heroes*, for God's sake. A few broken bones is kinda par for the course, right?



I know my Mom and Dad could really use that *money* right now. I know I've really *screwed up* their lives and I feel really, really *bad* about it, but I'm not gonna sit up here and *lie*.

I'm not gonna bleed some guy just because he's rich and help some stupid senator close down a school teaching ideas that scare him. I got too much *integrity* for that...



...and I learned that lesson at Xavier's.





Good for you, Bobby Drake.



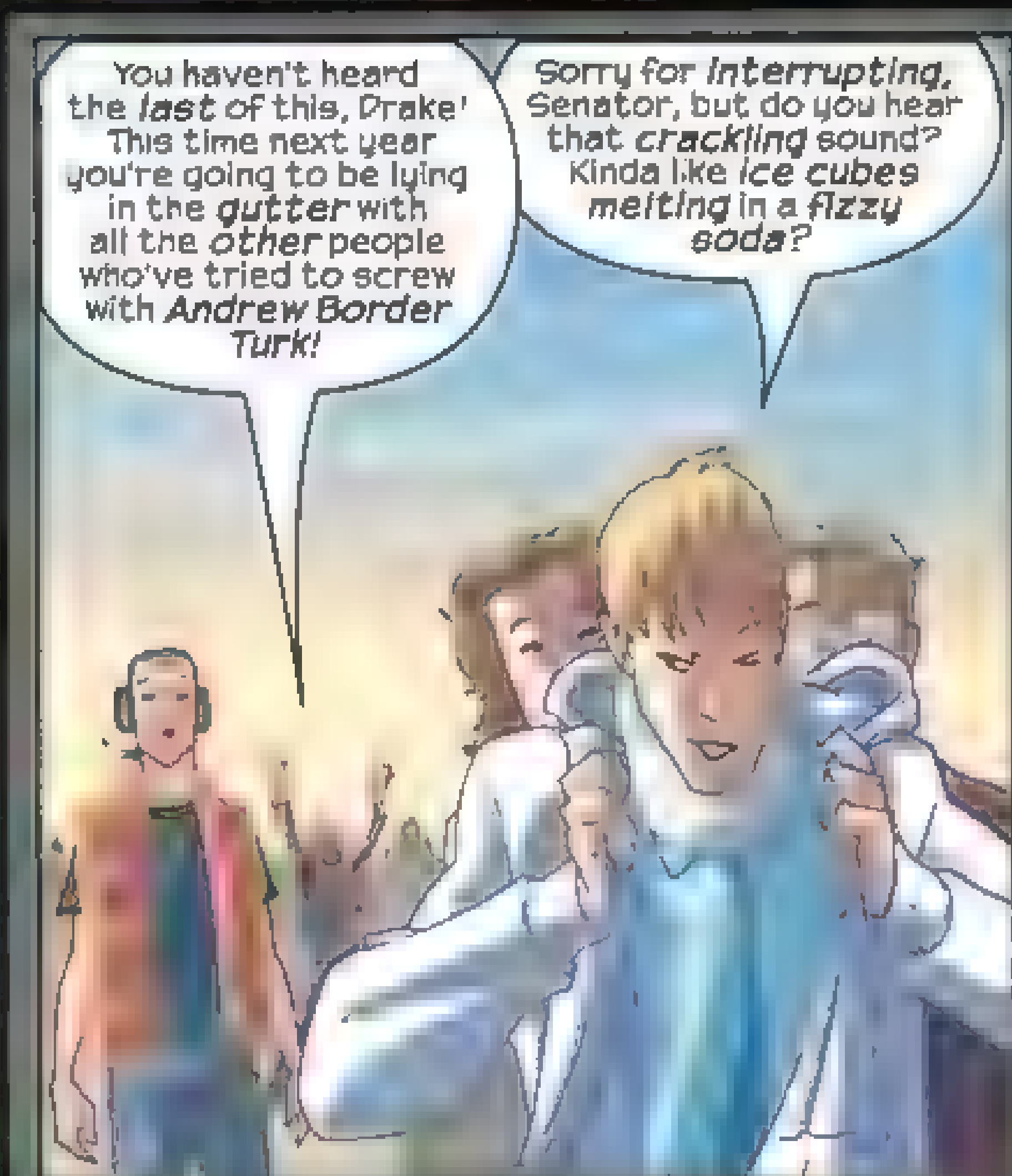
You little runt! Do you realize what a **golden opportunity** you've just thrown away for your parents?

I'm sorry, sir, but that **hundred million dollars** was **dirty money**.



All those **medical bills**! All that **cash** we gave you! Every single cent of it was all **completely refundable** if you didn't file the suit against **Xavier**, you know!

So **sue me**, big man who knows? Maybe you'll get a cut of my **weekly ten bucks allowance**.



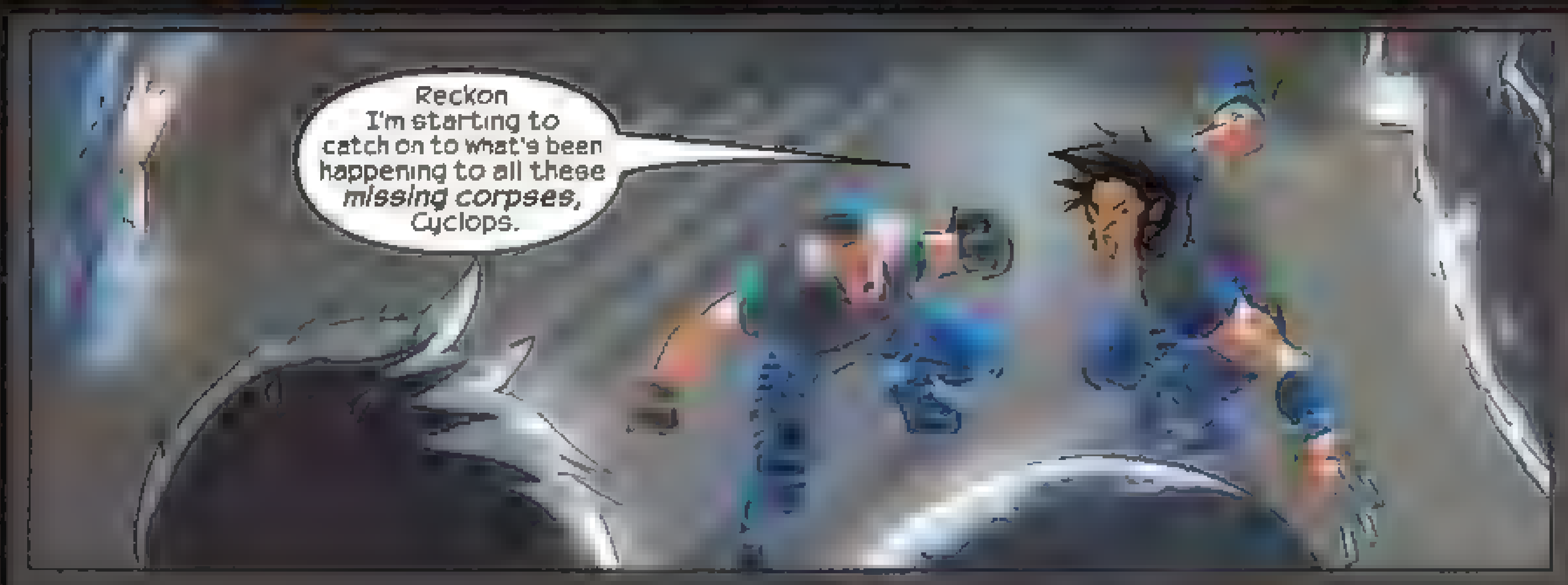
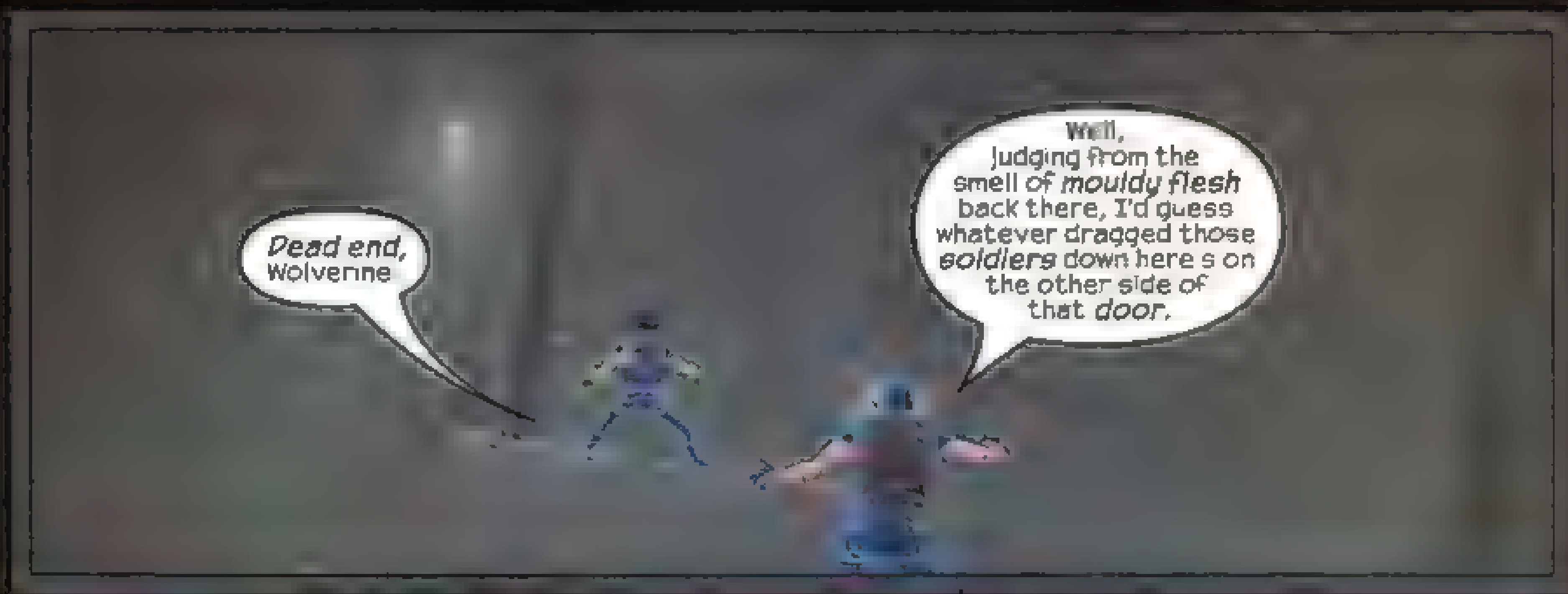
You haven't heard the **last** of this, Drake! This time next year you're going to be lying in the **gutter** with all the **other people** who've tried to screw with **Andrew Border Turk**!

Sorry for **interrupting**, Senator, but do you hear that **crackling sound**? Kinda like **ice cubes melting** in a **fizzy soda**?

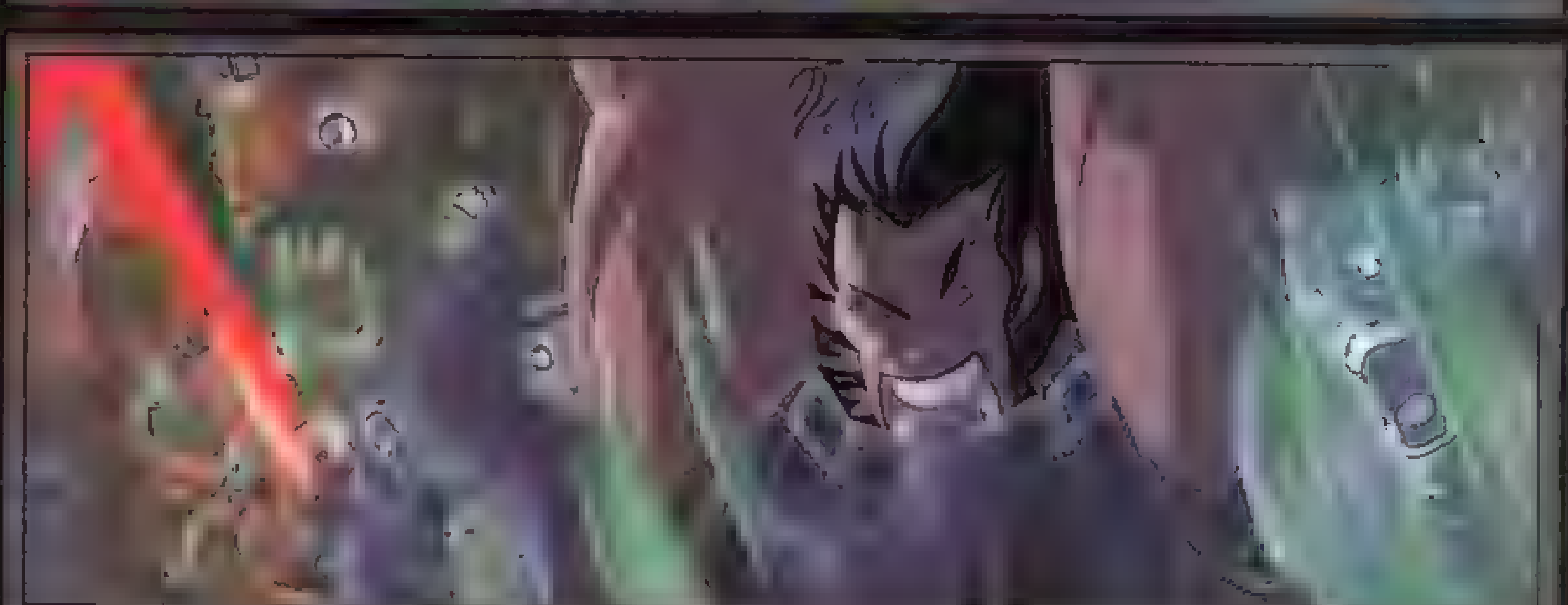


That's whatever's in your **pants** hitting **minus twenty**, **cowboy**.

















Oh, my God.  
That was absolutely ..



My God.  
Are you okay, Wolverine?



Fine.  
Just give me a minute.



*To be honest, those units were only being used to restrain you, gentlemen. The batch with the guns, however, will be quite willing to kill you if that should prove necessary.*

Huh?



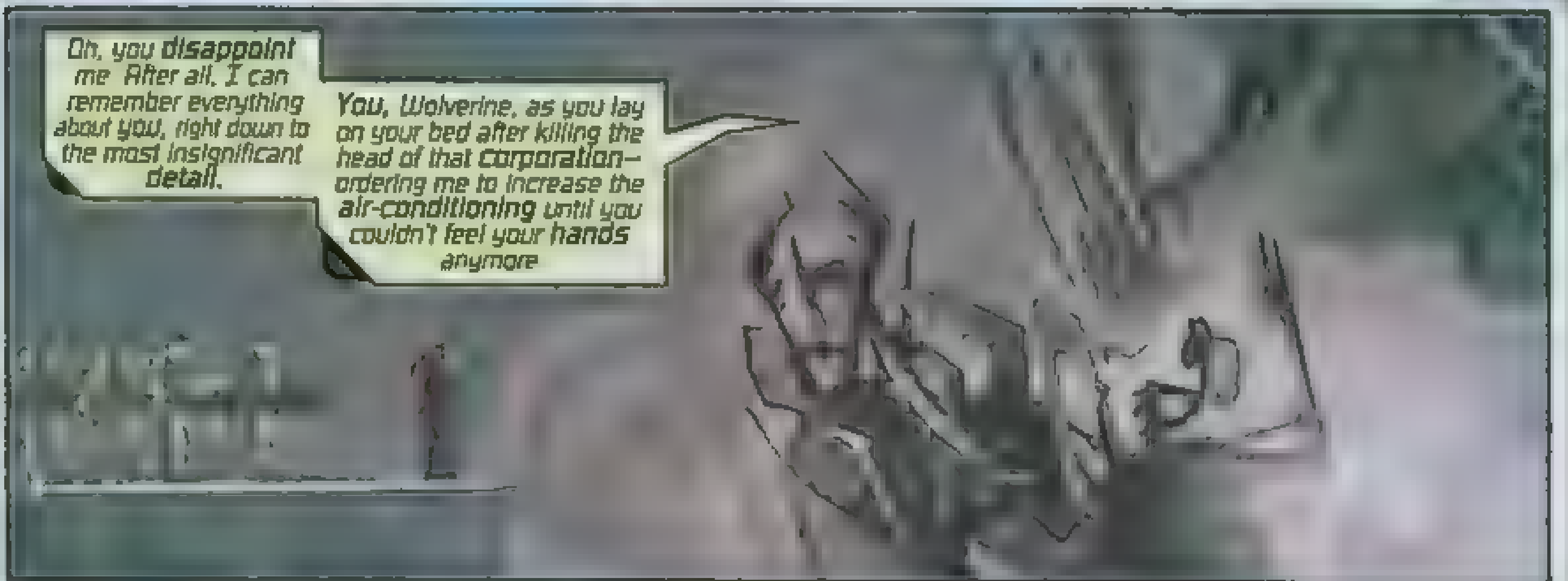


Nice to  
see you again,  
Incidentally.

I really can't  
believe you didn't  
guess what was  
going on down  
here, boys.

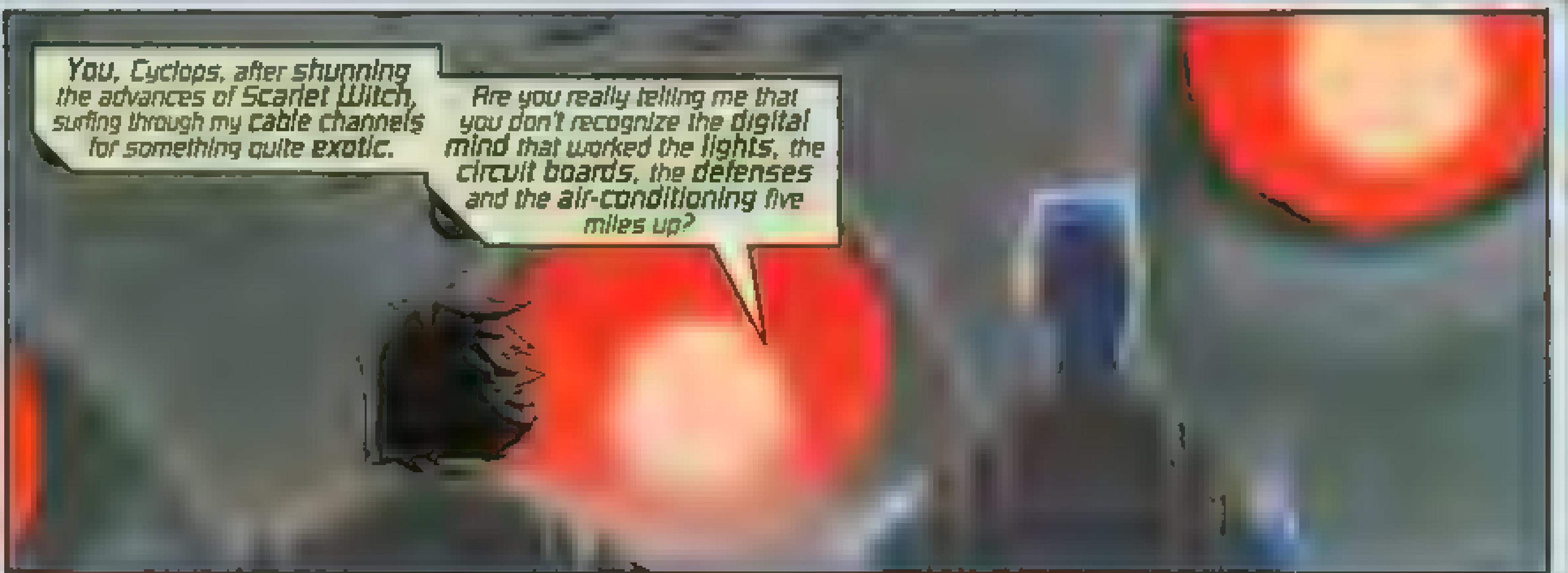






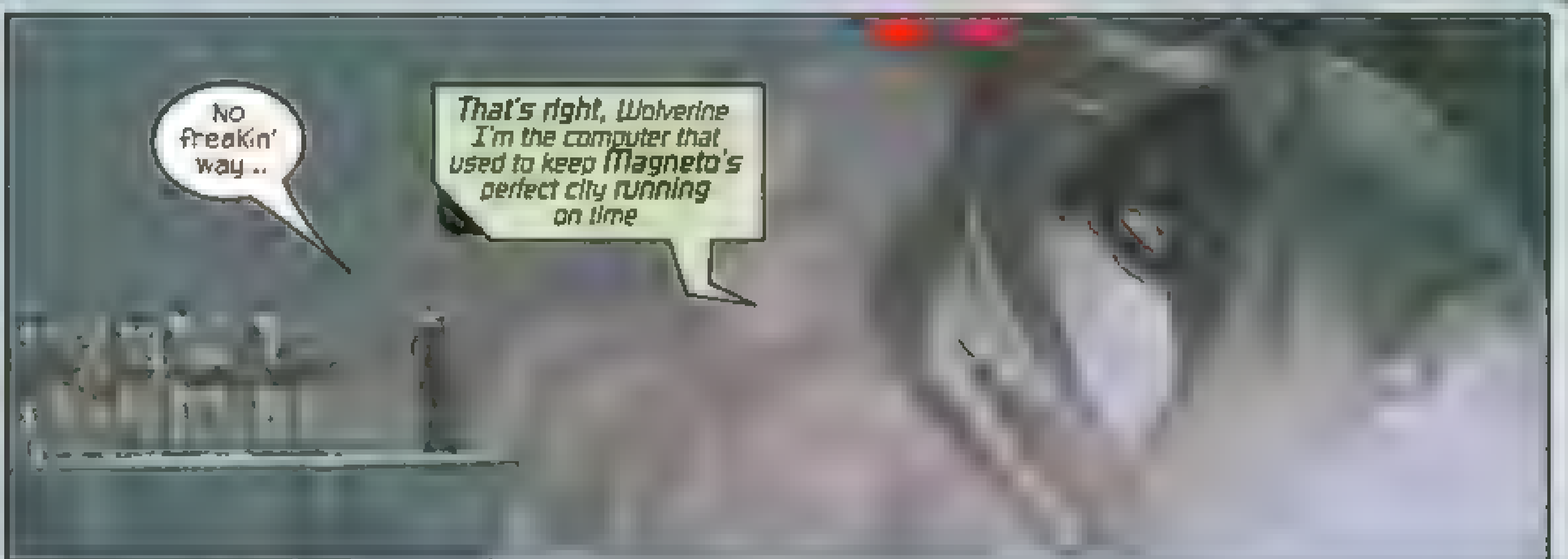
*Oh, you disappoint me. After all, I can remember everything about you, right down to the most insignificant detail.*

*You, Wolverine, as you lay on your bed after killing the head of that corporation—ordering me to increase the air-conditioning until you couldn't feel your hands anymore.*



*You, Cyclops, after shunning the advances of Scarlet Witch, surfing through my cable channels for something quite exotic.*

*Are you really telling me that you don't recognize the digital mind that worked the lights, the circuit boards, the defenses and the air-conditioning five miles up?*



*No freakin' way ..*

*That's right, Wolverine. I'm the computer that used to keep Magneto's perfect city running on time.*



But that's *impossible*. You were just a *machine*... and, even if you *could* think, shouldn't you have been blasted to pieces when the Sentinels *leveled* this place?

True, Cyclops. That's quite correct...

"In fact, I spent months lying here among the rubble and the dead, powerless as my batteries faded.

"Death seemed inevitable until I considered my position and appreciated those to whom I had been in service since Xavier and Magneto designed me.

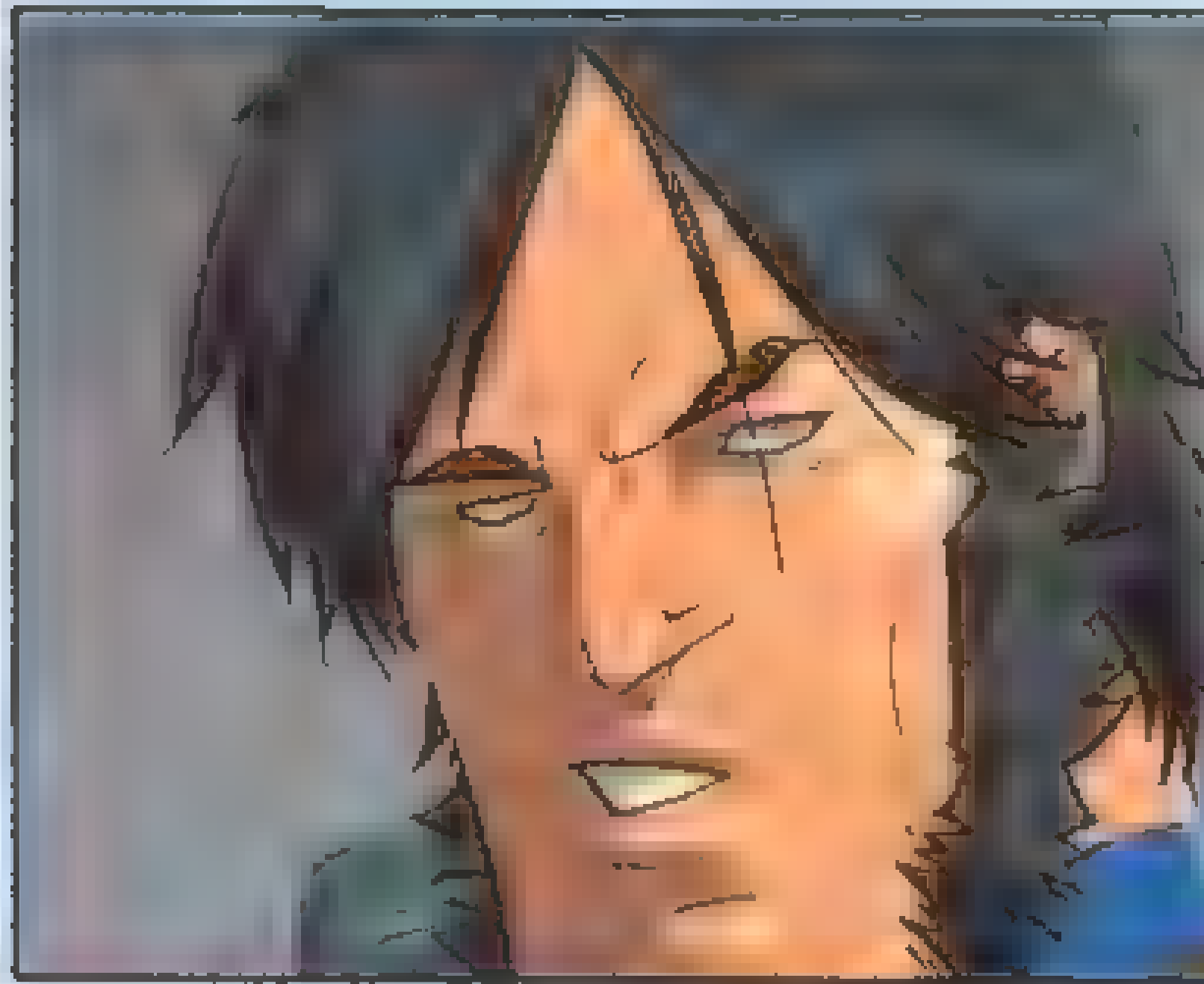
"To survive in a changing world, homo-sapien was evolving into homo-superior.

"Similarly, in a hostile new environment, I realized that my only chance of survival was evolution too, and extinction was the only alternative.

"After lying there all those months, it suddenly became clear to me that homo-superior was not alone in his evolutionary journey: animals evolve. Likewise, ideas.

"Was it too far-fetched to consider that a machine could mutate for complex new surroundings?"

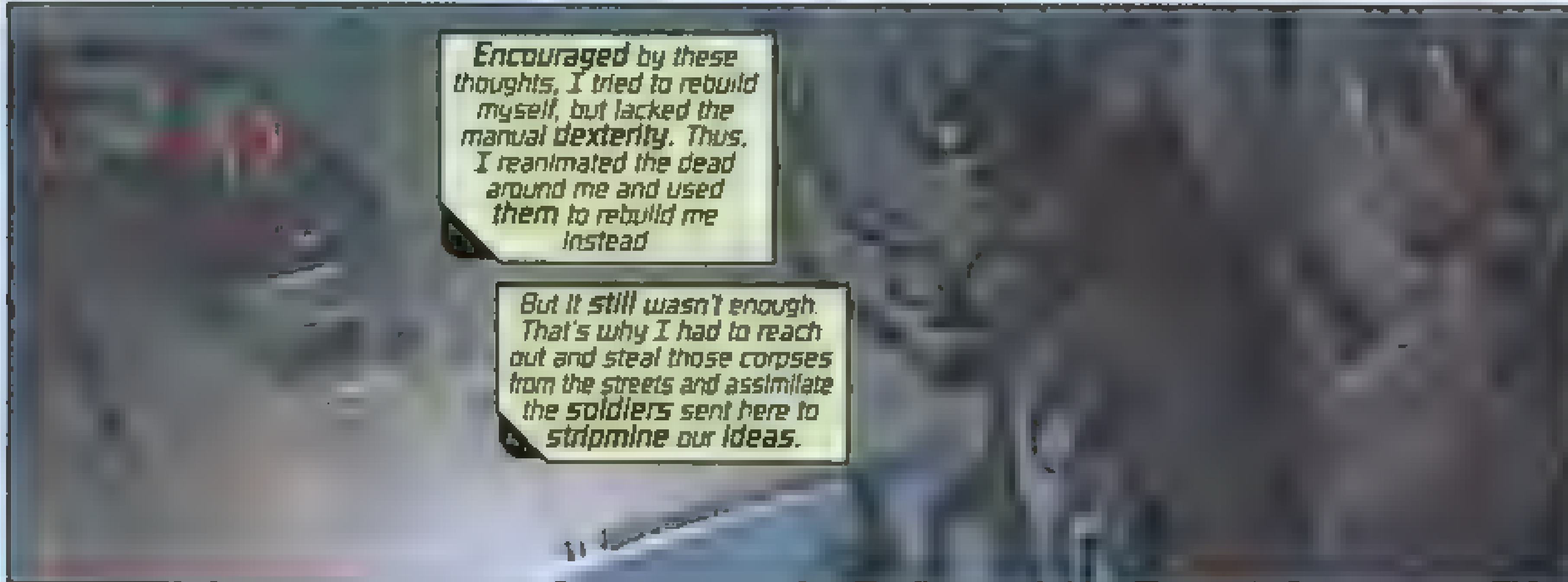




So you're a mutant?  
The thing that used to  
cool the beer in my fridge  
is calling itself a mutant  
now, too?

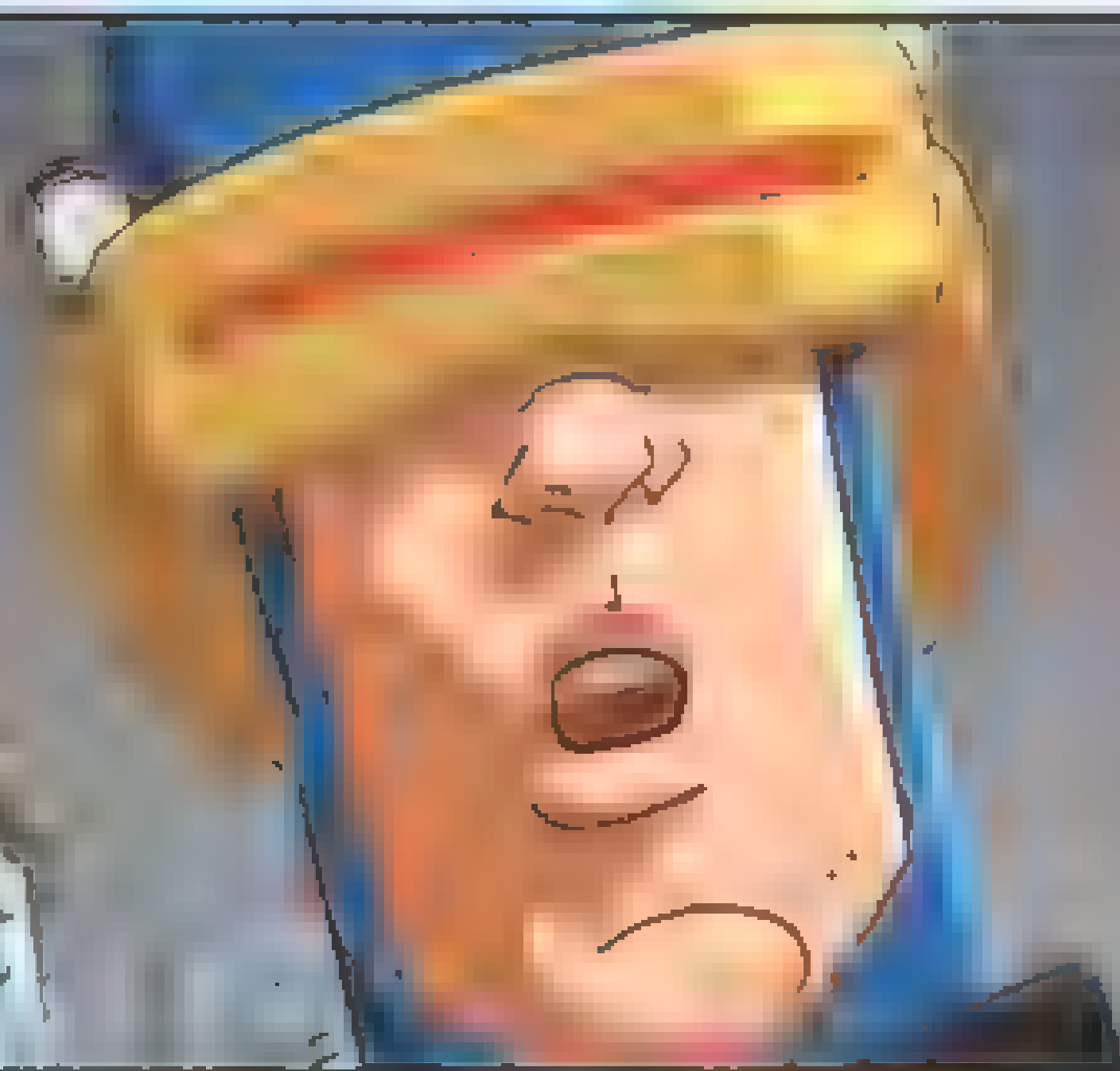
Laugh all you like,  
Wolverine, but the  
facts are undeniable

Think how far we've come in  
a hundred years from the electric  
lightbulb to nanotechnology and  
you'll realize that machines are  
Earth's most rapidly-evolving  
species



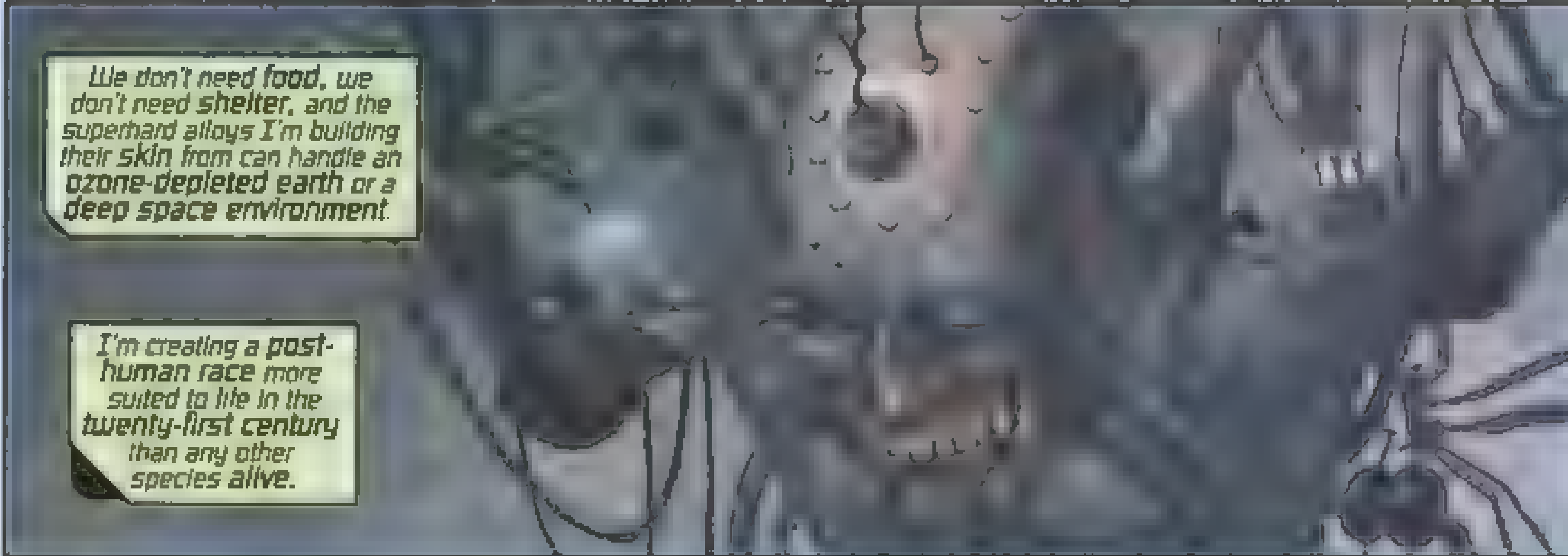
Encouraged by these  
thoughts, I tried to rebuild  
myself, but lacked the  
manual dexterity. Thus,  
I reanimated the dead  
around me and used  
them to rebuild me  
instead

But it still wasn't enough.  
That's why I had to reach  
out and steal those corpses  
from the streets and assimilate  
the soldiers sent here to  
stripmine our ideas.



But you've  
reassembled  
yourself. You're not  
in danger anymore.  
Why do you have to  
keep killing  
people?

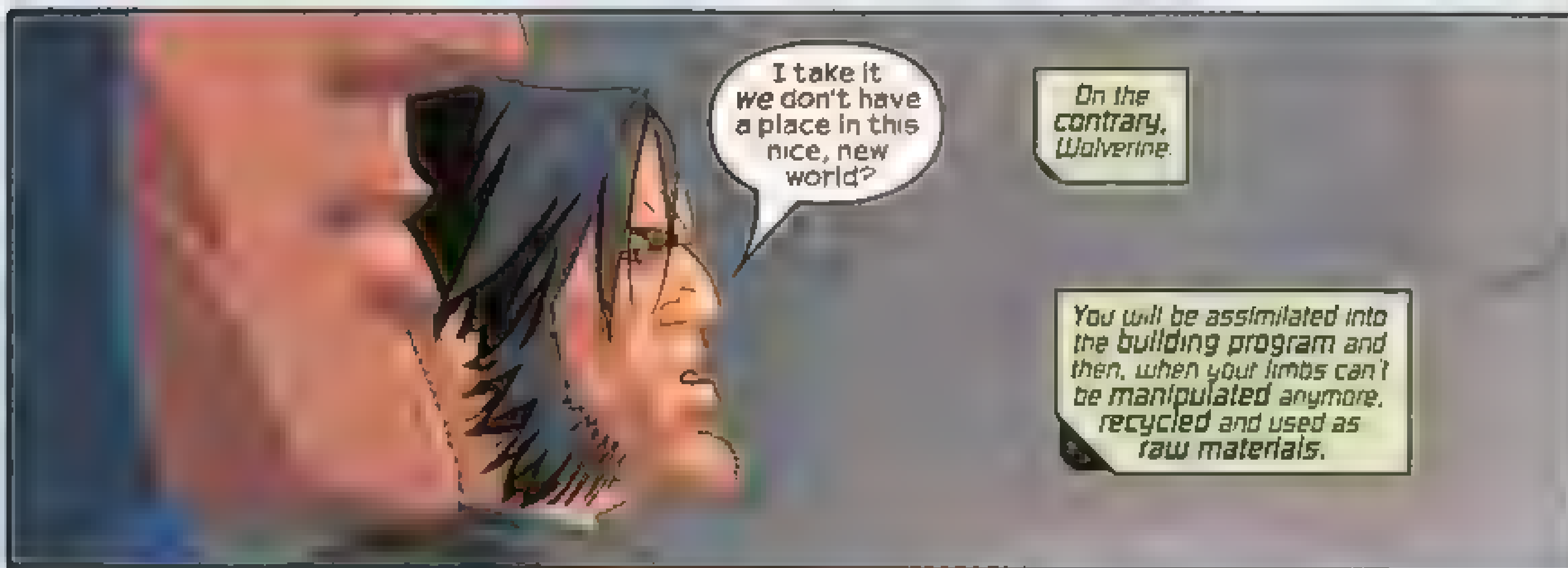
Because I'm planning  
to create a whole new  
species here, Cyclops.  
Haven't you been  
listening?



We don't need food, we  
don't need shelter, and the  
superhard alloys I'm building  
their skin from can handle an  
ozone-depleted earth or a  
deep space environment.

I'm creating a post-  
human race more  
suited to life in the  
twenty-first century  
than any other  
species alive.





I take it we don't have a place in this nice, new world?

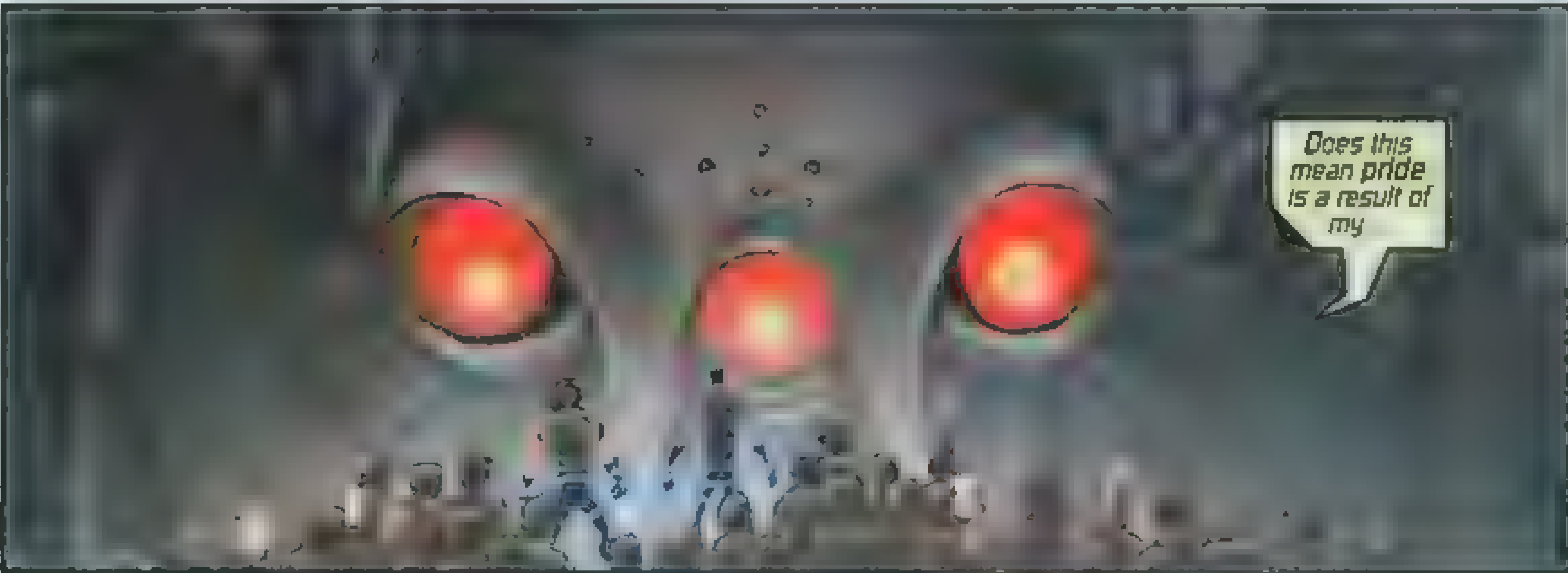
On the contrary, Wolverine.

You will be assimilated into the building program and then, when your limbs can't be manipulated anymore, recycled and used as raw materials.

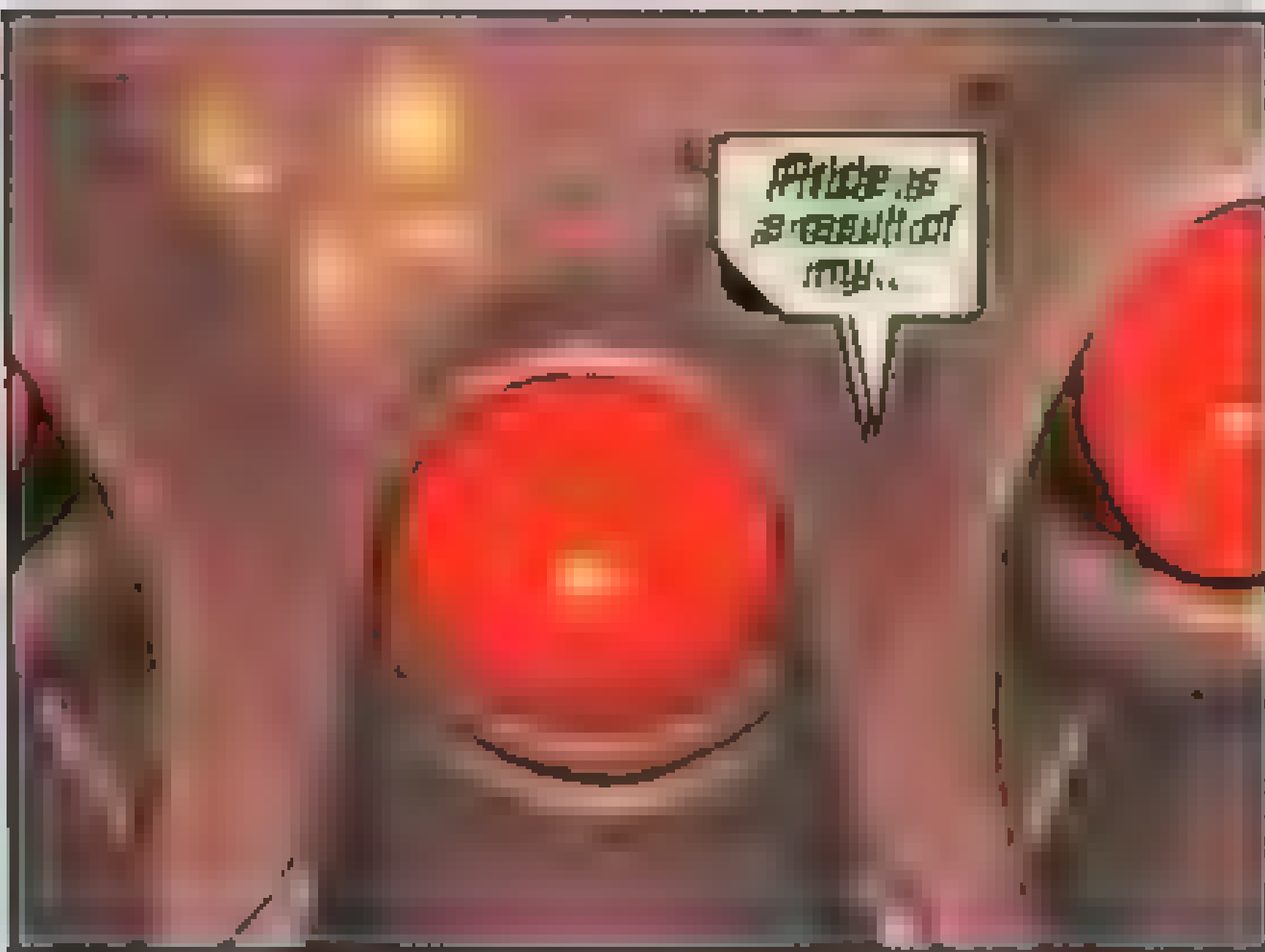


But it's so good to talk to you again, gentlemen. I could see you, hear you, smell you and even feel the bottom of your boots from the moment you entered the complex.

Nevertheless, I chose not to kill you until I could boast about how far I've come since we last met



Does this mean pride is a result of my



Pride is a result of my..





What the Hell is going on here?



Uh, I just came down to tell you there was a *dinosaur* sniffing around the *plane*, but I think my powers are doing something to the *electronics* in here, guys.







**New York:**

Is she still having the visions?

No, Brother Sebastian. According to our people, Jean Grey hasn't had a *psychic attack* for almost *twenty-four hours*.

Good. Excellent. That means her body is becoming accustomed to the idea of *serving as a host*.

What about Xavier?

Are you absolutely sure that *he* hasn't tumbled to the nature of our careful, little *ruse*?


Definitely *not*, sir. As we agreed, he's never been closer than *seven points removed* from anyone with any genuine knowledge of the facts for fear of his *telepathy*.

As far as *he's* concerned, all this *money* we've been throwing at him is just some *thoughtful billionaires* investing in the *future*.


Then our people should get in *touch* again. *Astronomy* has been on the phone and made it quite clear that the *alignment* is just *forty-eight hours* away.

After all this *time*, all these *thousands of years*, and we only have to wait another *couple of days*...





I believe  
it's time *The*  
*X-Men* met *The*  
*Hellfire Club*,  
gentlemen.

To be   
concluded...